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STRENGTHEN THE WALL

BY MYRON T. HERRICK

EARLY in September, 1900, a West Indian hurricane which reached a velocity of one hundred and thirty-five miles an hour piled up the waters of the Gulf of Mexico in enormous waves which swept over the city of Galveston and all but wiped it out of existence. Five thousand lives were lost from a population of less than 40,000; property to the value of \$17,000,000 was destroyed, and all the accustomed activity of that busy seaport came to an absolute standstill.

A catastrophe which killed one in eight of the people and injured thousands more, which destroyed their buildings and took away their means of livelihood, might well have led to the abandonment of a location so open to the dangers of the sea as the low, exposed island on which Galveston stands. But the people of Galveston did not desert. They had abiding faith in the future of their city. With true American courage they solved the problems of immediate relief. The politicians disappeared with the receding waters, and an efficient non-partisan commission was created to govern the city. The people rebuilt and repaired their houses and business places, raising the entire grade of the city in the process. And to insure against a recurrence of such a disaster, they constructed along the exposed eastern and gulf shores of the city a great sea wall—a strong and massive bulwark rising above the highest mark that the storm waves had reached. Galveston was destined to live, and live henceforth in security from the fury of the sea.

That sea wall cost more than \$2,000,000—a huge sum for a city of 40,000 population at any time. For Galveston, in its terrible distress and ruin, it seemed a wholly impossible amount. There was the reconstruction of almost the whole city to be undertaken, and while the generosity of the country and the world had been poured out for the relief of suffering,

faith in the future of Galveston had been badly shaken and credit was not easy to obtain.

But the people of Galveston raised the money for that sea wall. This was no ordinary municipal improvement, but the barrier that was to protect life and property for themselves and their loved ones. They built the wall, they found the money to pay for it, because it meant life or death to them. They had to do it, and they found a way.

Over the United States today hang the heavy storm clouds of war. A hurricane of awful destructive force, with unspeakable woe and terror in its train, has broken over the world and threatens us all with destruction.

Against that angry flood of disaster men are building a human wall—a barrier the most costly and precious that ever was seen or imagined, because it is erected of our own flesh and blood. That wall shelters all we hold dear in this world, all our happiness of today, all our hopes for the morrow. Daily now it grows stronger and stronger against the time when the storm shall be at length subdued and peace shall come again upon the earth.

It is not only the men at the front who make the wall. It is not only the men who build ships, who produce guns and munitions and supplies, who make the wall. It is you and I, every man and every woman and every child, who must build and maintain that wall with everything that we have, just as the people of Galveston in the midst of sorrow and distress turned all their resources to the building of a wall which was their only hope.

For most of us, money is the only contribution we can make for the building of that wall. That we can and must provide. No American with son or brother in France is going to hesitate to pledge the purchase of Liberty bonds. No American worthy of the name is going to haggle over the amount. There is only one amount for any one of us, and that is the utmost limit of our ability to pay and borrow. Those bonds are not to be regarded as an investment, though they do provide the safest security in the world. They are rather a sacred pledge that the men who hold the line in France and Italy shall have the same spirit of loyalty behind them that they themselves so bravely display; that while they offer their lives, we shall not withhold that which is infinitely less in value—our money.

Commensurate with the growing extent and expense of the nation's military and naval effort, the next Liberty Loan will be larger than any of the three preceding. It requires a degree of self-denial and saving more rigorous than anything we have ever experienced.

But America will subscribe the full amount asked. A man never knows the limit of his strength until the test comes. So with a nation: the emergency develops the response. Who would have thought two years ago that the country could subscribe the billions it has already raised for national defence, or that it could give in hundreds of millions for war relief?

America is a vast reservoir of financial strength which has barely begun to show the drain of war. There is almost no limit to what we can do. All together, each saving and subscribing to the limit of his resources, this loan can be, will be, carried through to success. As Galveston built a wall to defeat the seas, we are building a wall to beat the Huns. It means life or death to us. We have to do it, and we shall find a way.

MYRON T. HERRICK.